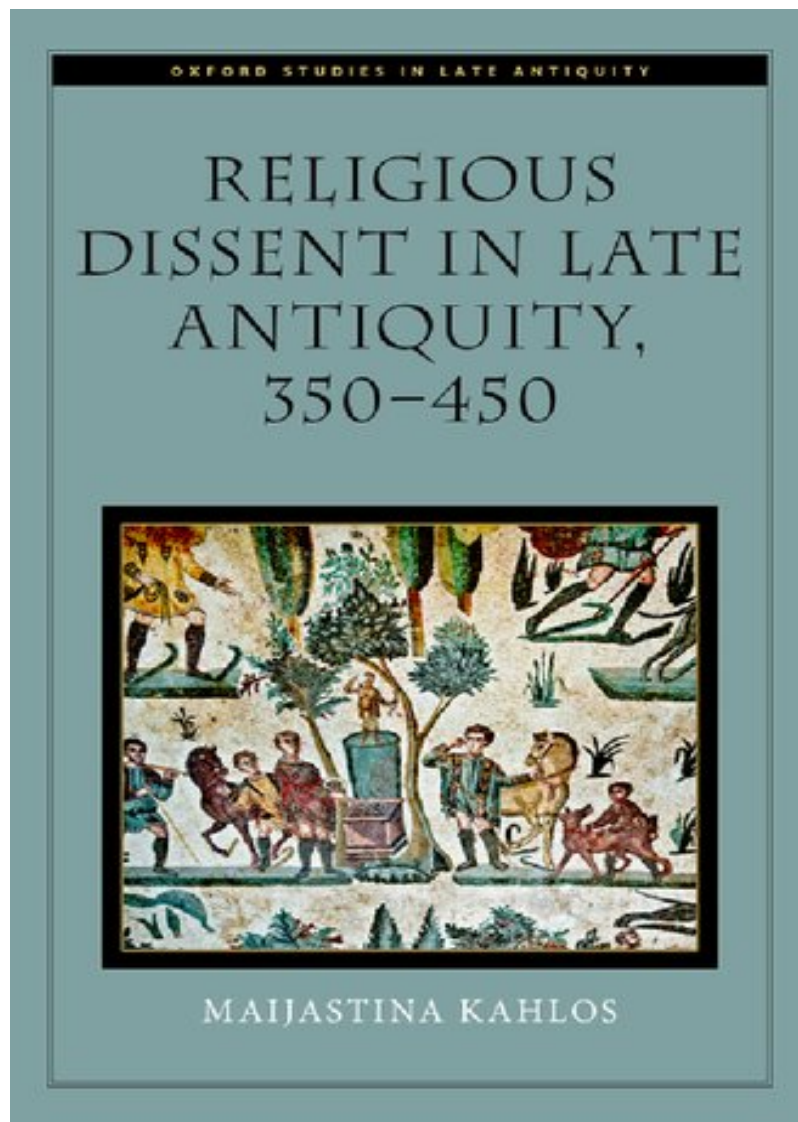


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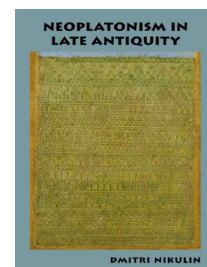


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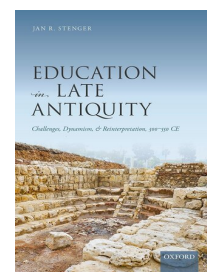
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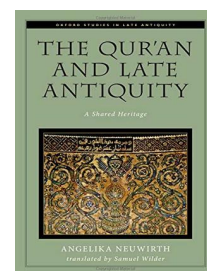
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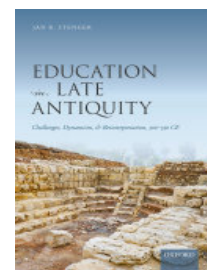
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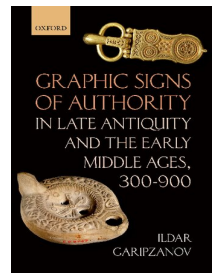
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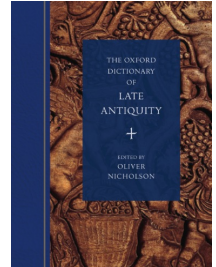
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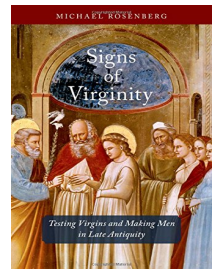
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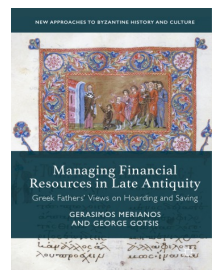
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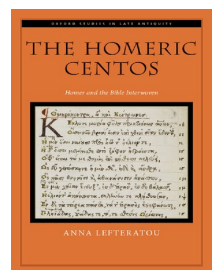
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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

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ISBN 978-0-19-006725-0

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

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'Heathen,' they called us. A word we learned from them.
If it meant anything, it meant people who don't know what's sacred.
Are there any such people? 'Heathen' is merely a word
for somebody who knows a different sacredness than you know.

Ursula K. LeGuin, *Voices* (London: Orion, 2006), 126

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Acknowledgements

WRITING THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS IS THE MOST GRATIFYING MOMENT in writing this book. As I have been busy with *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* for several years, there are many colleagues and friends whom I wish to thank for inspiring, guiding, or supporting me through the process.

I wish to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to colleagues in Rome, Perugia, Catania, Granada, Santander, Yale, Oxford, Exeter, St Andrews, Hawarden, Frankfurt, Münster, Göttingen, Aarhus, and Budapest, just to mention a few great scholarly places where I have attended colloquia and conferences over these years and met the authentic *res publica litterarum*. For their comments, advice, and hospitality, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Rita Lizzi, Chiara Tommasi, Michele Salzman, Mar Marcos, Juana Torres, Alessandro Saggioro, Hartmut Leppin, Richard Flower, Morwenna Ludlow, Douglas Boin, Lucy Grig, Noel Lenski, Jan Willem Drijvers, Kate Cooper, Johannes Hahn, Jan Stenger, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Tobias Georges, Averil Cameron, Neil McLynn, and Marianne Sághy (for even though my thanks may no longer reach her, she will always be in my warmest thoughts).

I am grateful to the entire team at Oxford University Press, especially Stefan Vranka for his patience during the process. I owe special thanks for Ralph Mathisen for taking my book into the Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity series and the anonymous reviewers who meticulously commented on my manuscript, made constructive suggestions, and saved me from many errors. I wish to thank Albion M. Butters for conscientiously and patiently revising my English.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to enjoy academic freedom as a research fellow, both at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and the Centre of Excellence 'Reason and Religious Recognition', University of Helsinki. Both places have been inspiring, multidisciplinary sites of research and great sources of brainstorming for a classicist and ancient historian, who was encouraged to start thinking outside her frames of Antiquity. I am grateful for Sami Pihlström and

Sari Kivistö for steady steering at the Collegium, and Risto Saarinen and Virpi Mäkinen for real recognition at the Centre of Excellence. My thanks are also due to the Ancient Team at the Centre, the leaders of the team, Ismo Dunderberg and Outi Lehtipuu, and the team members, Vilja Alanko, Raimo Hakola, Niko Huttunen, Ivan Miroshnikov, Marika Rauhala, Joona Salminen, Ulla Tervahauta, Siiri Toiviainen, Anna-Liisa Rafael, Miira Tuominen, and Sami Ylikarjanmaa, for their advice over these years. My warmest thanks also go to other members at the Centre—to name just a few of them, Hanne Appelqvist, Sara Gehlin, Heikki Haara, Heikki J. Koskinen, Ritva Palmén, Mikko Posti, and Panu-Matti Pöykkö—for cooperation in the serious sense and community full of laughter, coffee, spinning, and boxing.

I wish to thank my university colleagues Juliette Day, Alexandra Grigorieva, Marja-Leena Hänninen, Mari Isoaho, Tua Korhonen, Mia Korpiola, Antti Lampinen, Ilkka Lindstedt, Petri Luomanen, Nina Nikki, Katja Ritari, and Ville Vuolanto for their collaboration and inspiration. And what would a human be without her dear friends? Thanks for sharing and supporting, Johanna, Helena, Katja, Marja-Leena, Mia, Ritva, Pia, Tuula, and Ulla! This book was in the making for quite a while. This led my spouse, Jarkko Tontti, unfaltering in his encouragement, to make remarks in a manner similar to those which Dorothea uttered to Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*:

‘And all your notes,’ said Dorothea . . . ‘All the rows of volumes—will you not now do what you used to speak of?—will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use, and begin to write the book which will make your vast knowledge useful to the world? . . .’ (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1895, p. 147)

Jarkko comforted me that this will be my last book on the last pagans. Well, perhaps not, but it may be time to ‘take it as an opportunity’ and do something else for a change.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the most well-known authors follow the conventions of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* and Liddell and Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon*.

ACO	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz. Berlin 1959
<i>AntTard</i>	<i>Antiquité tardive</i>
BMCR	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
CAH	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> . Turnhout 1954–
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin 1862–
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
CTh	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
CIust	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i>
FIRA	<i>Fontes Iuris Romani antejustiniani II</i> , ed. J. Baviera & J. Furlani. Firenze 1968
IGLS	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de Syrie</i>
ILCV	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae veteres</i> . Berlin 1924–1967
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau. 1892–1916
HThR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JbAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JThS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i> . Cambridge MA 1912–
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i> . Manchester 1928–1988, London 1993

MGH AA	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptores antiquissimi</i>
MGH Cap. reg. Franc.	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Capitularia regum Francorum</i>
MGH Leg.	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Leges</i>
MGH SS rer. Merov.	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
NPNF	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris 1857–1866
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris 1844–1855
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RAL	<i>Rendiconti della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia dei Lincei</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> . Paris: Cerf, 1943–
Sirm.	<i>Constitutiones Sirmondianae</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>

Introduction: Rhetoric and realities

IN HER RECENTLY PUBLISHED *THE DARKENING AGE: THE CHRISTIAN Destruction of the Classical World*, Catherine Nixey shares a story of the all-embracing, ancient world that triumphant Christianity destroyed.¹ Nixey's book is, of course, a non-fiction book aimed at a wider readership, not the academic work of a specialist written for other specialists. Such a straightforward narrative is probably sexier for the media and promises to get more online clicks than a research report filled with unresolved questions and reservations.

In the research of the religious history of the late Roman world, however, we must exercise extreme caution in the construction of such ostentatious narratives. For this reason, *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* is not meant as a grand narrative. Instead, the book challenges those biased accounts that build on simplistic assessments of the categories of 'paganism' and 'Christianity'.

The focus of this book is on the religious dissident groups in the late Roman Empire in the period from the mid-fourth century until the mid-fifth century CE. I am not claiming that this is a pleasant story. By analysing religious dissent in Late Antiquity, I wish to demonstrate that the narrative is much more nuanced than the simple Christian triumph over the classical world. My interpretation is not sexy and sensational. Instead, it looks at everyday life, economic aspects, day-to-day practices, and conflicts of interest.

There are, and there have been, many straightforward melodramatic narratives over the centuries, both in academic research² and in popular non-fiction works. One of these has been the long-standing debate on the last phases of Roman paganism. According to the traditional view, explicated especially by Andreas Alföldi and Herbert Bloch after World War II, pagan aristocrats were united as a heroic and cultured resistance against the advance of Christianity, and they even rose up in the final battle near the Frigidus in 394. The notion of the last pagan stand was promoted by Alföldi, Bloch, and others especially during and after the war, in a *Zeitgeist* in which it was perhaps characteristic to construe Christian-pagan relations in terms of dichotomy and conflict.

1. E.g., Nixey 2017, 247: 'The "triumph" of Christianity was complete.' Nixey repeats the oft-told story of Christian triumph since Edward Gibbon, and before Gibbon, of the Christian church historians.

2. Athanassiadi 2006 and Athanassiadi 2010, 14 interpret the intellectual and spiritual development of Late Antiquity as the change from the 'zenith of acceptance' (*polydoxie*) to the trend towards one-sided thought (*monodoxie*); for criticism see Papaconstantinou 2011.

Later generations have outlined the world of Late Antiquity in more nuanced ways than the interpretations put forward immediately during and after World War II. The traditional interpretation of conflict has been challenged since the 1960s by Alan Cameron, among others.³ The ‘new radical’ view refutes the idea of the last pagan resistance as a romantic myth and contends that there was neither a pagan reaction in a military sense nor a pagan revival in a cultural sense. The fact that there are now more abundant and multifarious sources available for late antique studies than ever before has also led to further reinterpretations of the religious changes of Late Antiquity (the so-called Christianization) of the late Roman world.

However, the traditional view of conflict tends to live on in modern scholarship. It pops up in different forms, especially in non-specialist books, such as Nixey’s *The Darkening Age*. Why does the dichotomous and conflictual image of the pagan reaction continue to attract scholars (not to mention the general audience)? It seems that the melodrama of a last resistance with discernible heroes is both dramatic and simple enough to captivate more attention than the mundane, everyday nuances of economic and social issues.⁴ In Christian literary sources, the more committed or rigorist writers made a lot of noise, and it is this noise that has influenced the tendency to see the religious history of Late Antiquity primarily in antagonistic terms. The problems with these melodramatic grand narratives—either Christian triumphalism (often, but not always, connected with the Christian confessional agenda) or a gloomy decline of classical civilization (often, but not always, connected with a secularist worldview)—is that, in both cases, interpreters fall into the trap of taking the late antique, highly rhetorical sources at face value.

This is why in *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* I address two aspects: rhetoric and realities. Both are necessary for understanding the religious history of the late Roman Empire, particularly the shifting position of dissenting religious groups. In terms of the first, the research focuses on the analysis of discourse used in late antique sources, moving principally in the textual world of the writers. The second aspect involves social and historical research, which surveys the practical circumstances of religious minorities in late Roman society. This approach does not entail an epistemologically naïve distinction between the ‘text world’ and ‘historical reality’. These are not separable. Thus, this research delves into the interplay between the manifest ideologies and daily life found in our sources.

The hundred years under scrutiny, from c. 350 to c. 450 CE, stretch approximately from Constantius II’s reign until the end of Theodosius II’s reign. The time span covers the most crucial years of Christianization after the Constantinian turn and, consequently, the shifts in relative power between religious majorities

3. See also Alan Cameron 2011.

4. For the attraction of melodramas, see Lavan 2011a, lv–lvi.

and minorities. This period witnessed a significant transformation of late Roman society and a gradual shift from the world of polytheistic religions into the Christian Empire.⁵ However, this shift should not be plotted teleologically. Rather, in the fourth century, a wide variety of religions, cults, sects, beliefs, and practices coexisted and evolved in the Mediterranean world. The coexistence of religious groups led sometimes to violence, but these outbreaks seem to have been relatively infrequent and usually localized.

My purpose in this book is to explore what impact these changes had on the position and life of different religious groups. In the late Roman Empire, constant flux between moderation and coercion marked the relations of religious groups, both majorities and minorities, as well as the imperial government and religious communities. The area under examination is the late Roman Empire, in both the East and West. In my analysis of the status and everyday life of different religious groups, I am not aiming at an exhaustive or systematic treatise on what is clearly a wide-ranging topic. What I propose to provide is a detailed analysis of selected themes and a close reading of selected texts, tracing key elements and developments in the treatment of dissident religious groups. I have concentrated on specific themes, such as the limits of legislation, the end of sacrifices, the label of magic, and the categorization of dissidents into groups.

RELIGIOUS DISSENTERS

The religious groups under consideration are pagans and heretics. These terms are only shorthand: ‘pagans’ for non-Christians or polytheists; ‘heretics’ for Christians marked as deviants. Furthermore, these terms are relational. Pagans were a creation of Christian writers, of course; there would have been no pagans without the viewpoint of Christians. Likewise, the question of who is a heretic naturally depends on the perceiver.⁶ I am inclined to call the religious groups under scrutiny *religious dissenters* or *dissidents*, as well as *deviant groups* or *religious deviants*.

In late Roman society, relations between the religious majorities and minorities fluctuated. Over the course of the fourth century, Christianity shifted from a minority position to the majority one, or at least a strong minority, while the Graeco-Roman religions gradually fell to a minority position, or a silent and weakened majority.⁷ It is impossible to precisely define the relative proportions

5. The Christian Roman Empire here means the empire governed by Christian emperors, as in many regions it may have remained non-Christian in other aspects.

6. For discussions on the term ‘polytheist’, see Cribiore 2013, 7. The use of the terms ‘pagan’ and ‘heretic’ is covered in more detail in chapters 7 and 8.

7. For the majorities and minorities in Late Antiquity, see Brown 1961; Kaegi 1966, 249; Haehling 1978; Barnes 1989, 308–309; Barnes 1995; MacMullen 2009, 102–103; Alan Cameron 2011, 178–182; and Salzman 2002 on Roman aristocracy; except for Barnes, scholars usually estimate that the majority of the elite remained pagan up to c. 400.

of the religious groups in the Roman Empire. At best, we can make guesstimates. Moreover, the proportions of religious groups varied by area. Therefore, it is problematic to speak of religious minorities, because we cannot specify which groups—for example, pagans or Christians—were in the majority or minority in a specific place at a specific time.

The same applies to the power relations between the Nicene and other Christian groups (e.g., Homoians, or ‘Arians,’ as they were called by the Nicene Christians). In certain areas and spheres of politics at specific times, as in the imperial court during the reigns of Constantius II and Valens, the Homoians held the upper hand while the Nicenes (or pro-Nicenes) were at risk of being marginalized as deviants.⁸ Consequently, for most of the fourth century, the boundaries for the normative orthodoxy were in flux. Thus, what was ‘orthodox’ and what was ‘heretical’ were under continuous negotiation and struggle. Nicene Christianity eventually became the imperially supported church and the mainstream institution as late as the end of the fourth century, calling itself the Catholic Church.⁹ Nonetheless, in terms of the proportions and power relations that were significant, one cannot overemphasize the regional differences within the Roman Empire.¹⁰ What constituted the dominant group in one area did not hold true in another region.

In this book, I examine the ways in which dissident religious groups were construed as religious outsiders in late Roman society. The question of outsiders, or ‘aliens’ (*alieni, allotrioi*) in relation to ‘our’ religion and society, is a matter of who is outside, but also who is within; accordingly, it requires a formation of a mode of thinking about insiders (*nostri, oikeioi*).¹¹ Imperial legislation followed the logic that those who were ‘aliens’ or ‘foreigners’ in matters of religion were also aliens or foreigners in the eyes of Roman law.¹² Another question is how frequently this judicial *infamia* was handed down as a penalty and how significantly it influenced dissidents’ everyday lives in practice. Citizenship was only one aspect of social status and practical circumstances.

It is unavoidable that humans divide the world into ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Both individuals and groups distinguish themselves from the other and, by construing differences, make sense of themselves. There is no self or collective identity without

8. According to McLynn 2005, 86, in the 380s–390s, the Nicenes did not necessarily enjoy an overall ascendancy; Barnes 1997, 1–16, however, regards Homoians as already defeated by that point. Positions of power are not, of course, the same as the number of adherents.

9. The status of the creed settled in the Council of Nicaea (in 325) came to be recognized only gradually as the divinely inspired and unalterable standard of faith. For the complexities of the fourth-century doctrinal disputes, see Ayres 2004, 139–239; Gwynn 2007; Gwynn 2010; Wiles 1996.

10. Fredriksen 2008, 99 estimates that the groups outside the Nicene church constituted the majority of the total population in the fourth century and perhaps later.

11. The issue of *oikeioi* and *allotrioi* in the fourth century is highlighted by Elm 2012, 432.

12. Gaudemet 1984, 7–37. See chapter 2.

an other or others. Subsequently, the other is necessary in the construction of the self, with the self and the other being dependent on and complementary to one another.¹³ A group or community marks, clarifies, and checks its boundaries through defining the other. To the other are often ascribed the qualities that a group or community prefers not to see in itself. Therefore, the ways in which late antique religious dissenters were construed as a religious other reveal the processes of identity-building in late Roman society. Here identity is not understood as a stable entity but rather as something shaped, probed, and negotiated, being always in the making.¹⁴

The use of the term ‘identity’ in classical and early Christian studies has often been criticized. According to critics, identity is a modern and thus anachronistic concept, and is therefore not a proper tool for understanding people in the ancient world. Nonetheless, we are bound to our modern language in other respects as well—I am here writing in modern English, to use just one example. To take my point to the extreme (this is an argument *ad absurdum*, I admit), to properly remain within the period under scrutiny, should we use the vocabulary and concepts of the ancients only? In the case of the religious dissidents, this would mean employing terms such as ‘divine wrath’, ‘pollution’, and ‘demonic machinery’—all in Latin and Greek. Therefore, while we cannot avoid modern concepts, we can be aware of the hazards of using them. As Denise Buell appositely points out, ‘the problem is not that modern ideas are distorting historical analysis, since we can only interpret the past from the vantage point of the present’.¹⁵ Modern concepts like identity and othering, often taken from sociological research, are part of historical analysis from an etic or observer-oriented perspective—that is, observations made from outside. To impose classifications from a purely etic perspective necessarily imports modern categories and conceptions. Therefore, it is imperative to analyse emic terminology as well—that is, the ancient terms and concepts employed in ancient contexts.¹⁶ Historical research is a continuous act of balancing between etic and emic perspectives. Nonetheless, it is clear that the emic or subject-oriented approach—that is, from the inside—is not adequate. We need holistic analysis from the outside, but using modern conceptual tools.

The construction of the other is hierarchical, and this applies to late Roman society, too. Making differences is based on power relations: ranking superiors

13. For a general introduction to theories of otherness, see Kahlos 2011a. For a theoretical discussion, see Stuart Hall 1997, 234–238; Green 1985, 49–50; Judith Lieu 2004, 269; Shusterman 1998, 107–112; Gruenwald 1994, 9–10; Woolf 1998; Woolf 2011; Jonathan Hall 1997.

14. For useful discussions on the use of identity in modern scholarship and on the criticism of its use in pre-modern texts, see Iricinschi and Zellentin 2008b, 2, 11–12 n. 40; Judith Lieu 2004, 11–17; Cribiore 2013, 138.

15. Buell 2005, 4; see also Buell 2005, 14, remarking that ‘the question of the viability of using these [modern] categories . . . is partly about how to formulate an interpretive framework that accounts for historical difference while still being intelligible to the interpreter. . . . We can place modern categories into conversation with ancient ones without effacing their differences.’

16. Headland, Pike, and Harris 1990—esp. Harris 1990, 48–61 and Pike 1990, 62–74. See also Stratton 2007, 14–16 on emic and etic perspectives in the research of ancient ‘magic’.

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Exploring the Variety of Random Documents with Different Content

8. ANNO 1839.

Dear distant Germany, how often
I weep when I remember thee!
Gay France my sorrow cannot soften,
Her merry race gives pain to me.

In Paris, in this witty region,
'Tis cold dry reason that now reigns;
O bells of folly and religion,
How sweetly sound at home your strains!

Courteous the men! Their salutation
I yet return with feelings sad;
The rudeness shown in every station
In my own country made me glad!

Smiling the women! but their clatter,
Like millwheels, never seems to cease;
The Germans (not to mince the matter)
Prefer I, who lie down in peace.

And all things here with restless passion
Keep whirling, like some madden'd dream;
With us, they move in jog-trot fashion,
And well-nigh void of motion seem.

Methinks I hear the distant ringing
Of the soft bugle's notes serene;
The watchman's songs I hear them singing,
With Philomel's sweet strains between.

At home the bard, a happy vagrant
In Schilda's oak woods loved to rove;
From moonbeams fair and violets fragrant
My tender verses there I wove.

9. AT DAWN.

On the Faubourg Saint Marceau
Lay the mist this very morning,
Mist of autumn, heavy, thick,
And a white-hued night resembling.

Wandering through this white-hued night,
I beheld before me gliding
An enchanting female form
Which the moon's sweet light resembled.

Yes, she was, like moonlight sweet,
Lightly floating, tender, graceful;
Such a slender shape of limbs
I had here in France ne'er witness'd.

Was it Luna's self perchance,
Who with some young dear and handsome
Fond Endymion had to-day
In th' Quartier Latin been ling'ring?

On my way home thus I thought:
Wherefore fled she when she saw me?
Did the Goddess think that I
Was perchance the Sun-God Phœbus?

10. SIR OLAVE.

I.

At the door of the cathedral
Stand two men, both wearing red coats,
And the first one is the monarch,
And the headsman is the other.

To the headsman spake the monarch:
“By the priest’s song I can gather
“That the wedding is now finish’d—
“Keep thy trusty hatchet ready!”

To the sound of bells and organ
From the church the people issue
In a motley throng, and ’mongst them
Move the gay-dress’d bridal couple.

Pale as death and sad and mournful
Looks the monarch’s lovely daughter;
Bold and joyous looks Sir Olave,
And his ruddy lips are smiling.

And with smiling ruddy lips he
Thus the gloomy king addresses:
“Father of my wife, good morning!
“Forfeited to-day my head is.

“I to-day must die,—O suffer,
“Suffer me to live till midnight,
“That I may with feast and torch-dance
“Celebrate my happy wedding!

“Let me live, O let me live, sire,
“Till I’ve drain’d the final goblet,
“Till the final dance is finish’d—
“Suffer me to live till midnight!”

To the headsman spake the monarch:
“To our son-in-law a respite
“Of his life we grant till midnight—

OF HIS LOVE WE GRANT HIM MIGHT
“Keep thy trusty hatchet ready!”

II.

Sir Olave he sits at his wedding repast,
And every goblet is drained at last;
Upon his shoulder reclines
His wife and pines—
At the door the headsman is standing.

The dance begins, and Sir Olave takes hold
Of his youthful wife, and with haste uncontroll'd
They dance by the torches' glow
Their last dance below—
At the door the headsman is standing.

The fiddles strike up, so merry and glad,
The flutes they sound so mournful and sad;
Whoever their dancing then saw
Was filled with awe—
At the door the headsman is standing.

And as they dance in the echoing hall,
To his wife speaks Sir Olave, unheard by them all:
“My love will be ne'er known to thee—
“The grave yawns for me—”
At the door the headsman is standing.

III.

Sir Olave, 'tis the midnight hour,
Thy days of life are number'd;
In a king's daughter's arms instead
Thou thoughtest to have slumber'd.

The monks they mutter the prayers for the dead,
The man the red coat wearing
Already before the black block stands,
His polish'd hatchet bearing.

Sir Olave descends to the court below,
Where the swords and the lights are gleaming;
The ruddy lips of the Knight they smile,
And he speaks with a countenance beaming:

"I bless the sun, and I bless the moon,
"And the stars in the heavens before me;
"I bless too the little birds that sing
"In the air so merrily o'er me.

"I bless the sea and I bless the land,
"And the flow'rs that the meadow's life are;
"I bless the violets, which are as soft
"As the eyes of my own dear wife are.

"Ye violet eyes of my own dear wife,
"My life for your sakes I surrender!
"I bless the elder-tree, under whose shade
"We plighted our vows of love tender."

11. THE WATER NYMPHS.

The waves were plashing against the lone strand,
The moon had risen lately,
The knight was lying upon the white sand,
In vision musing greatly.

The beauteous nymphs arose from the deep,
Their veils around them floated;
They softly approach'd, and fancied that sleep
The youth's repose denoted.

The plume of his helmet the first one felt,
To see if perchance it would harm her;
The second took hold of his shoulder belt,
And handled his heavy chain armour.

The third one laugh'd, and her eyes gleam'd bright,
As the sword from the scabbard drew she;
On the bare sword leaning, she gazed on the knight,
And heartfelt pleasure knew she.

The fourth one danced both here and there,
And breath'd from her inmost bosom:
"O would that I thy mistress were,
"Thou lovely mortal blossom!"

The fifth her kisses with passionate strength
On the hand of the knight kept planting;
The sixth one tarried, and kissed at length
His lips and his cheeks enchanting.

The knight was wise, and far too discreet
To open his eyes midst such blisses;
He let the fair nymphs in the moonlight sweet
Continue their loving kisses.

12. BERTRAND DE BORN.

A noble pride on every feature,
His forehead stamp'd with thought mature,
He could subdue each mortal creature,
Bertrand de Born, the troubadour.

How wondrously his sweet notes caught her,
Plantagenet the Lion's queen!
Both sons as well as lovely daughter
He sang into his net, I ween.

The father too he fool'd discreetly!
Hush'd was the monarch's wrath and scorn
On hearing him discourse so sweetly,
The troubadour, Bertrand de Born.

13. SPRING.

The waters glisten and merrily glide,—
How lovely is love midst spring's splendour!
The shepherdess sits by the streamlet's side,
And twines her garlands so tender.

All nature is budding with fragrant perfume,
How lovely is love midst spring's splendour!
The shepherdess sighs from her heart: "O to whom
"Shall I my garlands surrender?"

A horseman is riding beside the clear brook,
A kindly greeting he utters;
The shepherdess views him with sorrowful look,
The plume in his hat gaily flutters.

She weeps and into the gliding waves flings
Her flowery garlands so tender;
Of kisses and love the nightingale sings—
How lovely is love midst spring's splendour!

14. ALI BEY.

Ali Bey, the true Faith's hero,
Happy lies in maids' embraces;
Allah granteth him a foretaste
Here on earth of heavenly rapture.

Odaliques, as fair as houris,
Like gazelles in every motion—
While the first his beard is curling,
See, the second smoothes his forehead.

And the third the lute is playing,
Singing, dancing, and with laughter
Kissing him upon his bosom,
Where the flames of bliss are glowing.

But the trumpets of a sudden
Sound outside, the swords are rattling,
Calls to arms, and shots of muskets—
Lord, the Franks are marching on us!

And the hero mounts his war-steed,
Joins the fight, but seems still dreaming;
For he fancies he is lying
As before in maids' embraces.

Whilst the heads of the invaders
He is cutting off by dozens,
He is smiling like a lover,
Yes, he softly smiles and gently.

15. PSYCHE.

In her hand the little lamp, and
Mighty passion in her breast,
Psyche creepeth to the couch where
Her dear sleeper takes his rest.

How she blushes, how she trembles,
When his beauty she descries!
He, the God of love, unveil'd thus,
Soon awakes and quickly flies.

Eighteen hundred years' repentance!
And the poor thing nearly died!
Psyche fasts and whips herself still,
For she Amor naked spied.

16. THE UNKNOWN ONE.

Every day I have a meeting
With my golden-tressèd beauty
In the Tuileries' fair garden
Underneath the chesnuts' shadow.

Every day she goes to walk there
With two old and ugly women—
Are they aunts? or else two soldiers
Muffled up in women's garments?

Overawed by the mustachios
Of her masculine attendants,
And still farther overawed too
By the feelings in my bosom,

I ne'er ventured e'en one sighing
Word to whisper as I pass'd her,
And with looks I scarcely ventured
Ever to proclaim my passion.

For the first time I to-day have
Learnt her name. Her name is Laura,
Like the Provençal fair maiden
Whom the famous poet loved so.

Laura is her name! I've gone now
Just as far as Master Petrarch,
Who the fair one celebrated
In canzonas and in sonnets.

Laura is her name! like Petrarch
I can now platonically
Revel in this name euphonious—
He himself no further ventured.

17. THE CHANGE.

With brunettes I now have finish'd,
And this year am once more fond
Of the eyes whose colour blue is,
Of the hair whose colour's blond.

Mild the blond one, whom I love now,
And in meekness quite a gem!
She would be some blest saint's image,
Held her hand a lily stem.

Slender limbs of wondrous beauty,
Little flesh, much sympathy;
All her soul is glowing but for
Faith and hope and charity.

She maintains she understands not
German,—but it can't be so;
Hast ne'er read the heavenly poem
Klopstock wrote some time ago?

18. FORTUNE.

Madam Fortune, thou in vain
Act'st the coy one! I can gain
By my own exertions merely
All thy favours prized so dearly.

Thou art overcome by me,
To the yoke I fasten thee;
Thou art mine beyond escaping—
But my bleeding wounds are gaping.

All my red blood gushes out,
My life's courage to the rout
Soon is put; I'm vanquish'd lying,
And in victory's hour am dying.

19. LAMENTATION OF AN OLD-GERMAN YOUTH.

The man on whom virtue smiles is blest,
He is lost who neglects her instructions;
Poor youth that I am, I am ruin'd
By evil companions' seductions.

For cards and dice soon dispossess'd
My pockets of all their money;
At first the maidens consoled me
With smiles as luscious as honey.

But when they had fuddled with wine their guest,
And torn my garments, straightway
(Poor youth that I am) they seized me,
And bundled me out at the gateway.

On waking after a bad night's rest,—
Sad end to all my ambition!—
Poor youth that I am, I was filling
At Cassel a sentry's position.

20. AWAY!

The day's enamour'd of the night,
The springtime loves the winter,
And life's in love with death,—
And thou, thou lovest me!

Thou lov'st me—thou'rt already seized
By fear-inspiring shadows,
And all thy blossoms fade,
To death thy soul is bleeding.

Away from me, and only love
The butterflies, gay triflers,
Who in the sunlight sport—
Away from me and sorrow!

21. MADAM METTE.

(From the Danish.)

Says Bender to Peter over their wine:
 "I'll wager (though doubtless you're clever)
"That though your fine singing may conquer the world,
 "My wife 'twill conquer never."

Then Peter replied: "I'll wager my horse
 "To your dog, or the devil is in it,
"I'll sing Madam Mette into my house
 "This evening, at twelve to a minute."

And when the hour of midnight drew near,
 Friend Peter commenced his sweet singing;
Right over the forest, right over the flood
 His charming notes were ringing.

The fir-trees listen'd in silence deep,
 The flood stood still and listen'd,
The pale moon trembled high up in the sky,
 The wise stars joyously glisten'd.

Madam Mette awoke from out of her sleep:
 "What singing! How sweet the seduction!"
She put on her dress, and left the house—
 Alas, it proved her destruction!

Right through the forest, right through the flood,
 She speeded onward straightway;
While Peter, with the might of his song,
 Allured her inside his own gateway.

And when she at morning return'd back home,
 At the door her husband caught her:
"Pray tell me, good wife, where you spent the night!
 "Your garments are dripping with water."

"I spent the night at the water-nymphs' stream,
 "And heard the Future told by them;
"The mocking fairies wetted me through

THE MOCKING LANCES wetted me through

“With their splashes, for going too nigh them.”

“You have not been to the water-nymphs’ stream,

“The sand there could ne’er make you muddy;

“Your feet, good wife, are bleeding and torn,

“Your cheeks are also bloody.”

“I spent the night in the elfin wood,

“To see the elfin dances;

“I wounded my feet and face with the thorns

“And fir-boughs cutting like lances.”

“The elfins dance in the sweet month of May

“On flowery plains, but the chilly

“Bleak days of autumn now reign on the earth,

“The wind in the forests howls shrilly.”

“At Peter Nielsen’s I spent the night,

“He sang so mightily to me,

“That through the forest, and through the flood

“He irresistibly drew me.

“His song is mighty as death itself,

“To-night and perdition alluring;

“Its tuneful glow still burns in my heart,

“A speedy death insuring.”

The door of the church is hung with black,

The funeral bells are ringing,

Poor Madam Mette’s terrible death

To public notice bringing.

Poor Bender sighs, as he stands at the bier,—

’Twas sad to hear him call so!—

“I now have lost my beautiful wife,

“And lost my true dog also.”

22. THE MEETING.

The music under the linden-tree sounds,
The boys and the maidens dance lightly;
Amongst them two dance, whom nobody knows,
Of figures noble and sightly.

They float about here, they float about there,
In a way that strange habits expresses;
They smile at each other, they shake their heads,
The maiden the youth thus addresses:

“My handsome youth, upon thy hat
There nods a lily splendid,
That only grows in the depths of the sea,—
From Adam thou art not descended.

“The Kelpie art thou, who the fair village maids
Would’st allure with thy arts of seduction;
I knew thee at once, at the very first sight,
By thy teeth of fish-like construction.”

They float about here, they float about there,
In a way that strange habits expresses;
They smile at each other, they shake their heads,
The youth the maid thus addresses:

“My handsome maiden, tell me why
“Thy hand so icy cold is?
“And tell me why thy snow-white dress
“So moist in every fold is?

“I knew thee at once, at the very first sight,
“By thy bantering salutation;
“Thou art no mortal child of man,
“But the water-nymph, my relation.”

The fiddles are silent, and finish’d the dance,
They part like sister and brother,
They know each other only too well

they know each other only too well,
And shun now the sight of each other.

23. KING HAROLD HARFAGAR.

The great King Harold Harfagar
In ocean's depths is sitting,
Beside his lovely water-fay;
The years are over him flitting.

By water-sprite's magical arts chain'd down,
He is neither living nor dead now,
And while in this state of baneful bliss
Two hundred years have sped now.

The head of the king is laid on the lap
Of the beautiful woman, and ever
He yearningly gazes up tow'rd her eyes,
And looks away from her never.

His golden hair is silver grey,
His cheekbones (of time's march a token)
Project like a ghost's from his yellow face,
His body is wither'd and broken.

And many a time from his sweet dream of love
He suddenly is waking,
For over him wildly rages the flood,
The castle of glass rudely shaking.

He oftentimes fancies he hears in the wind
The Northmen shouting out gladly;
He raises his arms with joyous haste,
Then lets them fall again sadly.

He oftentimes fancies he hears far above
The seamen their voices raising,
The great King Harold Harfagar
In songs heroical praising.

And then the king from the depth of his heart
Begins sobbing and wailing and sighing,
When quickly the water-fay over him bends

When quickly the water-ray over him bends,
With loving kisses replying.

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